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ABSTRACT

Parents of multiple birth children frequently wonder whether it is best for their children to be separated or placed together in school. This guide from the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs (NOMTC) asserts that research and expert opinion demonstrate that mandatory separation of multiple birth children is ineffective and can be detrimental to the educational and emotional growth of these children. For this reason, this NOMTC guide strongly recommends that placement of each set of multiples be evaluated on an individual basis. In order to facilitate these decisions, the guide covers the following areas: (1) "Basic Twin Information" (identification of twin type, differences in social relationships, differences in intellectual development); (2) "Mandatory Separation Policy: Differing Opinions" (educators, twins, parents); (3) "'Expert' Views on Separation"; (4) "The Case for Gradual Separation"; (5) "Reasons to Separate"; (6) "Reasons for Not Separating Twins"; (7) "Individuality"; (8) "Retention and/or School Readiness of One Twin"; (9) "Tips for Teachers of Twins"; and (10) "To Separate or Not to Separate: Who Should Decide?" (Contains a list of suggested reading and 27 references.) (EV)

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PLACEMENT OF MULTIPLE BIRTH CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

A Guide for Educators

Publication of
National Organization of
Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc.

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The NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF MOTHERS OF TWINS CLUBS, INC. (NOMOTC) is a nonprofit network of approximately 400 mothers of twins clubs across the United States. Founded in 1960, NOMOTC's primary purposes are research, education, and group support. NOMOTC's membership represents approximately 15,000 individual parents of multiples acress the United States.

NOMOTC's membership cooperates with and participates in projects conducted by qualified researchers involved in medical, psychological, and educational studies. These research studies involve twins and/or their families. Results are shared with members and others who have direct interest in the special aspects of child development which relate to multiple birth children.

NOMOTC maintains a MULTIPLE BIRTH DATA BANK, an information registry containing data about thousands of multiple birth sets. This information, used only with permission of participants, is available to qualified medical and educational researchers.

The Education Department of NOMOTC publishes a 24-page quarterly newspaper, ***MOTC's Notebook***, containing articles of interest to individual parents of multiples, reports of study results, convention reports, research department updates, book reviews, and items of club and individual concern.

The Membership Department of NOMOTC provides direction and guidance to member clubs and operated a three-part Support Services Program to assist individuals in special situations. Working closely with the Executive Secretary, this department maintains a referral service and assists parents of multiples searching for special information or for the nearest local club.

NOMOTC maintains a fully-equipped Executive Office which serves as a central clearinghouse for processing official mail, referrals, research, membership, publicity and educational information.

National's member clubs are where problems are shared and solved. All departments of NOMOTC combine to solve those problems which extend beyond the local level. Publication of this booklet offers the well-researched solution to one such problem frequently shared by National's members.

NOMOTC welcomes your interest and your questions. Write or call the Executive Office.

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By Linda Hostetler Dreyer

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Foreword

Parents of multiple birth children (twins, triplets, and more) often face a rigid school policy when they wish to discuss classroom placement of their children. They frequently ask, "Is it best for my twins/triplets to be separated or placed together in school?" When advised to consult their local school educators for guidance, parents are often confronted with a firm school policy requiring separation, regardless of the circumstances. This eliminates parents and their children from the decision-making process regarding their unique situation.

Additional training and study of multiple birth children has not universally been provided in college education classes. The reason for this lack of education is that multiple birth children have been a rarity within the general population. Since the incidence of multiple births is rising, educators are going to be increasingly confronted with educational issues concerning these children. Therefore, decisions made regarding the classroom placement of multiple birth children should be based on:

1. Zygosity of the twins (identical or fraternal)
2. Research studies
3. Parental input
4. Personality of each child within the twin set
5. Previous separation experiences
6. Articles and books on the subject

NOMOTC's research and study of experts' opinions regarding classroom placement has proven that mandatory separation of multiple birth children is ineffective and can be detrimental to the educational and emotional growth of these children. For this reason, NOMOTC strongly recommends that placement of each set of multiples be evaluated on an individual basis.

BASIC TWIN INFORMATION

While multiples are still a minority group within the entire school population, these births are rising due to rapid advancement in the scientific field of fertility. In the United States, 80,000 twins, triplets and quadruplets are born each year. One out of every 50 children is a multiple birth child.

Psychologist Nancy L. Segal, former assistant director of the University of Minnesota's Center for Twin and Adoption Research, was associated with the Minnesota Study of Twins Reared Apart. In an article entitled, "Not All Twin Types are Alike," Dr. Segal wrote the following.

> *"Researchers have determined that meaningful interpretations and applications of findings about twins require acknowledgement of specific twin types. Each type (identical, fraternal; same-sex fraternal, opposite-sex fraternal) presents unique biological and psychological situations that deserve special attention."*

In order to develop an understanding of the twins in your school, it is necessary to note the distinguishing characteristics between the above mentioned types of twins.

Identification of Twin Type

There are two types of twins: monozygotic (MZ) or identical, one-egg twins; and dizygotic (DZ) or fraternal, two-egg twins. Debate continues over whether there is a third type of twins, thus researchers today continue to classify twins as identical or fraternal until additional evidence of polar body twinning becomes available. Of the entire twin population, approximately one-third are identical twins and two-thirds are fraternal twins. Of the fraternal twin population, approximately half are boy/girl sets, while half are same sex sets. Slightly more than half of all twins born are males.

Identical twins result when a single fertilized egg splits at 1 to 14 days after conception. These twins are genetically alike, having the same chromosomes and usually remarkable physical similarities. These twins are NOT entirely identical, however. Each twin is an individual and has a unique personality and traits of his own. Identical twins are always the

same sex, have the same blood type, same hair and eye color, and the same nose and ear shapes.

Fraternal twins result from two fertilized eggs. On the average, they share half their genes in common by descent. Fraternal twins are not necessarily any more alike than any two single siblings born to the same mother and father. The difference between fraternal twins and non-twin siblings is that twins share the same intrauterine environment and are the same age. They may or may not be of the same sex.

Although height and weight differences between identical twins are common at birth, these twins tend to become more similar in size with advancing age. In contrast, fraternal same-sex twins may begin life with size resemblance but show a reduction in similarity with advancing age. If fraternal same-sex twins have a high proportion of their genes in common, they may look quite similar to the point of being confused by other people. Fraternal opposite-sex twins, depending upon the number of shared genes, show varying degrees of resemblance and are unlikely to be mistaken for one another.

Twin Types: Differences in Social Relationships

In examining a number of readings, the most common finding is that identical twins share a closer relationship than fraternal twins. For example, Helen Koch, Ph.D. conducted a study in 1966 at the University of Chicago. She compared the social, intellectual, and physical development of 5- and 6-year old fraternal and identical twin pairs and matched non-twin siblings. Identical co-twins showed less rivalry than other twin types. (Co-twins is a term referring to twins within the same twin sibling set.) Same-sex fraternal co-twins displayed the highest degree of conflict.

Segal also conducted a study at the University of Chicago during which identical and fraternal same-sex co-twins between 7 and 10 years of age were filmed as they worked jointly on a puzzle completion task. Again, identical co-twins demonstrated a higher degree of cooperation on this task. All twins were matched in general intelligence so that differences in ability or comprehension of the task did not explain the differences in the degree of cooperation.

The relationship between opposite sex twins seems to differ from those of other types of twins. This is most likely due to the basic

differences in male-female development. When Helen Koch analyzed the social relationships between members of young boy-girl co-twins, she found that females emerged as the more dominant members and chose their peers over their twin siblings as playmates. The female twins tended to be more critical of their twin brothers than their twin brothers were of them. Conversely, the males indicated an appreciation of their twin sister's guidance but felt somewhat threatened by their female co-twin's superiority.

Twin Types: Differences in Intellectual Development

Several studies have shown that, in general, identical co-twins display an average difference of five points in IQ while fraternal co-twins differ by approximately ten points. It was also found that fraternal twins are more similar in IQ than ordinary brothers and sisters.

It has also been demonstrated that twins on the average score several points below the population mean on standard tests of intelligence. Since many IQ tests rely on verbal ability, the decline may be due to the tendency toward early delayed speech development in twins.

Because twins are frequently premature, often develop their own language, and parents have less time to help develop verbal skills, speech development in twins may be approximately three months slower than in single birth children. By the time multiples are nearing 8 years old, they have usually "caught up" to single birth children.

MANDATORY SEPARATION POLICY: DIFFERING OPINIONS

Educators

When consulting local educators, many parents report facing an ironclad policy concerning the separation of multiple birth children in school. Many find that although there is usually no written school board policy to dictate separation, there often exists a policy generated by the school principal. A report of a study done in 1976 by Ramona Emmons, then a Ph.D candidate at Purdue University, is discussed by Terry Pink Alexander in her book, ***Make Room for Twins.***

This study examined twins' classroom placement at the elementary school level and showed that both parents and principals identified the

principal as the one who decided school placement. Of 168 randomly selected principals from ten state school directories, 83 percent of the principals favored separate placement for twins. Nine percent of these principals went so far as to recommend that parents send twins to two different schools if two separate classrooms were not available within the same school. Of the principals responding, less than four percent were flexible in their decisions concerning the classroom placement of twins.

NOMOTC conducted a random survey of 1,423 teachers and principals across the United States. Of the educators surveyed, half of them believed in a policy of separation of all multiples in school. Many educators, however, were unsure about several of the issues relevant to the multiples. Many areas that need to be addressed educationally were identified in the survey.

As emphasized in the NOMOTC survey, there has been a lack of written material and educational programs about multiples in the educational field. Only fifteen percent of the respondents had the subject of multiples discussed in their college education classes. Only one percent had an inservice or district training session addressing the issues of educating twins.

Why do educators believe that multiple birth children must be ROUTINELY separated in school? Since educators consider the promotion of positive self-concept among children to be a top priority, they work to insure the healthy social, emotional, creative, physical, and intellectual growth of children in school. The conclusion, then, is that separation policies exist because educators believe separation is healthy for multiple birth children. What proof is there that positive self-image does not develop among co-twins in the same classroom?

Twins

How do twins feel about school classroom placement? In the same study by Emmons, the report indicated that out of the 249 twin pairs enrolled at the schools, only 55.1 percent preferred to be separated, though 77.5 percent were separated. In another study done by Elliott, who was working toward a M.ED degree at Brock University in Ontario, 167 persons responded to a questionnaire. Of the persons responding, answers from both members of 73 twin sets between the ages of 12 and

73 were included. The results:

41% agreed with decisions made on their behalf.

51% favored separation, but not in early childhood.

31% favored total separation from the start of elementary school.

25% chose gradual separation after grade 3 or grade 6 if there was a concern.

The findings from the questionnaire also indicated:

- twins want involvement in matters which affect them personally;
- twins who are never given the opportunity to experience being together or being separated are robbed of an opportunity that only twins can experience;
- multiples who experience alternating styles throughout their early years will not harbor feelings of resentment for having been treated as singletons, completely disregarding their bond of twinship.

A twin herself, Kay Cassill wrote the following in her book, ***Twins: Nature's Amazing Mystery.***

> *"At the same time that they are given the 'two for one' treatment by casual acquaintances and are even possibly under pressure from family to remain alike and stay together, twins are often confronted with well-meaning school teachers, guidance counselors, and psychologists who insist that they make an abrupt, definite break with each other in school. This is what happened to my sister and me, and many other twins report that they were confronted with similar dilemmas. In our case, it wasn't just the idea of enforced separation that annoyed me; it was the belief on the part of strangers that they knew what was best for my twin and myself. Such good intentions coupled with poor judgment may set the twin bond in concrete; some duos acquire an 'it's us against the world' attitude and in the process ensnare themselves."*

In other words, separation can also be counter-productive.

Psychologist David Hay, director of LaTrobe University's (Australia) ongoing study of 560 different sets of school-age twins, said in an article

in ***PIVOT*** magazine:

> *"It is interesting that when we ask twins about their feelings on this topic [school placement], the only twins who complain about what has happened to them are some of those who have been separated."*

Upon examination of the two studies by Emmons and Elliott, it would appear that all twins do not want to be placed in separate classrooms, just as all twins do not want to be placed in the same classroom. **Twins feel that the best policy is no policy at all.**

Parents

How do parents of twins feel about the issue of separation? When NOMOTC surveyed parents, most agreed that no policy regarding classroom placement should be set. Parents in the NOMOTC survey felt that an acceptable policy should be flexible, allowing placement for each set of multiples to be considered individually.

According to the study reported by Emmons and discussed by Alexander, 78.5 percent of the parents favored separate placement. Whether the feelings of the parents in this study differed if they were themselves twins is unknown. However, according to the survey done by Elliott, 38 percent of those parents, who were themselves twins, chose NO separation for their own twin children. These findings would indicate that being a member of a twin set is a unique experience. Perhaps parents and educators alike would change their minds about separation if they had experienced being a twin.

In the Emmons study, the heavy vote by parents in favor of separation may not be representative of their true sentiments. Most members of Mothers of Twins and Parents of Multiples Clubs are extraordinarily exposed to individualizing theories through books, articles, and lectures at meetings. In addition, many parents are influenced by twin separation policies in their community schools as they perceive that teachers and principals are the "experts" in all matters concerning education.

"EXPERT" VIEWS ON SEPARATION

In the book ***Twins and Supertwins***, author Amram Scheinfeld

speaks about the origins of separation policies in schools. He pointed out that the idea of separating twins in school is in line with the idea of "individualizing" them and that this is a comparatively new idea. He said that in 1948 the late Professor Horatio H. Newman was trying to correct the widespread belief that it would be harmful to ever separate twins in school when Newman wrote, "It is a common notion that it is injurious to twins—especially identical twins—to separate them: for example, to send each to a different school or college." Newman pointed out that pairs of twins may differ in their attitudes toward each other, and that one type might never want to be separated while "reluctant" twins who resent the fact that they are alike, might want to be separated. Newman went on to say, "Whether any harm would ensue from separating the former type, may be determined only by actually separating them and seeing."

There have been scant few studies done on the subject of separation of twins in school, most of them having been anecedotal in nature. Scheinfeld addresses this lack of scientific research in his book when he says, ". . .while many parents and teachers have assumed that the need for separating twins has long been established by scientific research, the fact is that no valid study on the point had been made prior to the very recent one by Dr. Howard Mittman." Dr. Mittman intensively questioned and tested high school students ranging from 15 to 18 years of age. Included were 22 sets of identical twins, 21 sets of same-sex fraternal twins, and 21 pairs of same-sex singleton siblings. Dr. Mittman drew the following conclusion as quoted in Scheinfeld's book:

> *"While changes in personality development do accompany twinship, they are not, as many believe, necessarily detrimental to the child's life adjustments. On the contrary, twinship appears to be accompanied by a slightly superior social adjustment; harm, rather than help, is more likely to result if twins are separated in school or at home."*

Since Dr. Mittman's scientific study, a more recent one was included in the November, 1970 edition of ***The Research Journal***, a publication of the University of Maryland's College of Education. In this study, researchers (Leeper and Skipper) from Florida State University set out to investigate the effects of placement of twins in the same or separate

classrooms in terms of achievement, acceptance and adjustment. At the conclusion of the study, the authors summarized their findings as follows:

> *"Most of the research done on the separation of twins in school suggests that separation is advisable. In this study twins in grades one through six who had not been separated in the classroom were paired with those who had been. Significant differences were sought in achievement, social acceptance, and adjustment. Some differences were discovered at certain grade levels, but no reliable pattern emerged. The authors see these results as indicating separation is not necessarily advisable."*

The statement that "all experts agree about separating twins" appears to be a myth. For example, Dr. Benjamin Spock says in his child care book: "It seems foolish and cruel to have an arbitrary rule about separation of twins in school when there is no need."

Drs. Kizziar and Hagedorn, themselves twins, wrote in the book, ***Gemini: The Psychology and Phenomena of Twins***:

> *"Existing research fails to either reject or endorse separation of twins at school. Our study supports the premise that each pair of twins must be considered individually before such a judgment is made, and that this decision should be made each year, since the youngsters and the circumstances are constantly changing. . . Many twins seem to thrive when they are in the same class. Neither depends upon the other, and they enjoy being together and learning together. If they are happy and seem well-adjusted, there is usually no reason for them to be separated. . . No matter how well twins seem to be doing in classes together, it is wise for them to be separated periodically to make certain that each can continue to make a successful adjustment apart from his twin."*

Drs. Ann McGreevy and Joseph Renzulli seem to support the view of Hagedorn and Kizziar. In their report of a study conducted in 1984, entitled "Connecticut Twin Study: A Study of Twins Included and Not

Included in Gifted Programs", they say the following:

> *"Classroom placement of twins in school should be decided individually, case by case, with teachers, parents, and twins themselves. Placement may vary from grade to grade. Research suggests that in some cases, the twin not doing as well academically may perform significantly better when placed with his or her twin for all or part of the school day."*

THE CASE FOR GRADUAL SEPARATION

Even those "experts" who support separate classroom placement do seem to be in agreement that separation should be gradual. In an article in ***Twins Magazine***, Dr. Barry E. McNamara of the Department of Special Education at Hofstra University and his wife, Francine, who is a certified social worker, explained:

> *"We are not insensitive to the negative aspects of this separation. For many twins, this [kindergarten, first grade] may be the first time they will spend considerable time away from their co-twin. Therefore, we believe that parents should provide 'separate' experiences as early as possible. At the same time, they [parents] should impress upon school personnel that while they may support separate classes, they want the process to be one that is sensitive to the needs of their children."*

Kay Cassill, in pointing out the detriment to premature separation said:

> *"Since twins face a double separation as they enter school—separation from home and separation from each other—the traumatic experience may so affect them that they present the teacher with disciplinary problems, whereas, they have never before been anything but model children."*

In Kay Cassill's book, Peggy Scantland, a mother with a background in elementary education says:

> *"My background and education is in elementary education, but my feelings about separation or together-*

ness of multiples in school have been developed because I'm a mother of twins—not a teacher. I do NOT think twins should be routinely separated in school, particulary in the early grades. The child leaving home for the first time is making a tremendous change. To be leaving MOM and a twin sibling at the same time would be too much to ask."

Martha J. McAfee, then a graduate student at Texas Women's University, wrote in an article which first appeared in the Fall 1976 Issue of ***MOTC's Notebook***:

"The first school separation will be more or less difficult depending on the preparation at home . . . Separation at school can be traumatic for one or both of the pair. There is, in effect, a double separation—separation from home to enter school, and separation from each other. This may be too much for the children emotionally."

Baker, Fanelli, Meyer, and Molten of the Mainline Mothers of Twins Club are authors of the booklet, ***Twins: A Guide to Their Education***. The booklet contains the following quotation on the subject:

"Even identical twins can be separated successfully at this time [entrance to kindergarten], if they are mature enough and if, during the pre-school years, the parents have made a point of strengthening the individuality of each twin by planning separate outings, visits, activities and group play. . . "

However, it is necessary to keep in mind that not all parents of multiples will be able to provide separation experiences. The lack of finances, time, and parenting information are the main obstacles. First, one must realize that modern society is comprised of working mothers. Many families may not be able to provide a preschool separation experience; in fact, the financial burdens may prevent parents from providing preschool experiences of any kind. Second, with parents working outside the home, many lack the time to plan separate outings for twins. The problem increases dramatically with family size. With increasing pressure to take an active part in their children's schooling—pressure to volunteer at school, necessity to guide their children through

a multitude of school projects and homework, desire to provide outside activities—by the time their children are in elementary school, time is a precious commodity for parents. Third, one must remember that not all parents of twins have access to information advising them to prepare their children for separation in the preschool years. While some parents lack the finances and time to educate themselves about parenting strategies, some disagree with the concept of early separation for their youngsters.

Unless there is a strong reason to separate, enlightened school principals recommend keeping twins together for at least the kindergarten year and, perhaps the first grade year of school. The recommendation to keep twins together when they are first entering school is strongly supported by Dr. David Hay, who says:

> *"At the time twins start school, there is much to be said for keeping them together until they adapt to the classroom. . . They may not always be together in the class, but even having one's twin on the other side of them can be reassuring."*

REASONS TO SEPARATE

Although there is no substantial evidence to support the policy that twins must be placed in separate classrooms in order for them to grow and develop as individuals, sometimes circumstances do exist which would indicate that separation is advisable. Sheryl McInnes and Irene Campbell of Parents of Multiple Births Association, Inc. (POMBA, Canada) provide the following examples of such circumstances.

- Constant "togetherness" is hindering the development of social skills in one or both.
- A "division of labor" exists.
- Insensitive comparisons have led to feelings of inadequacy in one twin.
- A child's problems are attributed to the fact that he is a twin.
- The twins form a "power unit" causing disruptive behavior.
- Twins exploit the twinship to cheat or play tricks.
- One twin appears to resent the lack of privacy resulting from sharing a classroom.
- One twin proves to be a constant distraction to the other.

Additional reasons for possible separation are:

- In opposite-sex pairs, the female twin is overprotective or "mothering" the male co-twin.
- In skill grouped classrooms where the abilities of one twin are far above those of his co-twin.
- The twins WANT to separate.

Wise parents and educators will realize that some of the above behaviors may be evident one year and not the next.

REASONS FOR NOT SEPARATING TWINS

Listed below are some reasons given for keeping twins together in the classroom:

- Major emotional upheavals have occurred in the family—i.e., death, divorce, a move, etc.
- Only one classroom is available.
- UNEQUAL education due to two different teachers employing different methods of teaching.
- Twins are at or near the same skill level in a skill-based classroom.

Twinline, a nonprofit twin study agency in Berkeley, California, makes four suggestions regarding school placement.

1. Do not separate twins who want to be together. Forced separation can damage self-esteem, inhibit language development, and delay learning.
2. Do not automatically separate twins in their first school year. Such a separation adds to the stress of starting school and may actually increase the twins' need to be together.
3. Allow twins as much independence as they are ready to handle. Twins flourish when allowed to separate on their own timetable.
4. Encourage twins to choose separate classes as they gain confidence in the school situation.

INDIVIDUALITY

Much of the reasoning behind the trend to separate twins into separate classrooms has been that this separation will foster the development of

individuality. However, authors, who are themselves twins, suggest that individuality is best fostered by promoting the self-esteem of each child. Ways of encouraging individuality are giving praise for individual accomplishments and avoiding verbal comparisons. It has been suggested that too much emphasis may be placed upon ineffective methods of developing individuality—making sure that twins are dressed differently, forcing them to develop opposite outside interests, and making sure that twins are separated upon entrance to school. Perhaps, twins—especially identicals who share the same genetic makeup—ARE expressing individuality when they choose the same activities, the same dress, or share the same mannerisms.

RETENTION AND/OR SCHOOL READINESS OF ONE TWIN

In some pairs, it is felt that one twin shows signs of being ready to begin school while the other does not. This is particularly common in opposite-sex twins when the girl is generally ready before her brother. A kindergarten teacher responding to NOMOTC's survey of educators wrote: "After teaching kindergarten for five years, my opinion is that children should start kindergarten at their correct age—regardless of ability. A kindergarten teacher is trained in early childhood techniques. Each child is taught according to his/her capabilities." All children mature at differing rates, and one that is considered to be developmentally behind during kindergarten may have "caught up" by first or second grade.

There are times when one twin may be doing poorly in school and retention is recommended. Retention of one twin should be a last resort as it is rarely the answer to the problem. In the case of twins, both suffer resentment. The passing twin often feels guilt that he "has all the brains." The retained twin often feels he will never measure up.

Decisions to send one twin to school before his co-twin or to retain one of a twin set should be made very carefully, and should only be done after all other solutions fail. It is best to identify the problem and provide the appropriate services or remediation. All authorities recommend intervention programs and consulting a psychologist before coming to such a decision.

TIPS FOR TEACHERS OF TWINS

Barry and Francine McNamara support the notion of placing twins in different classes to reinforce the individual student's identity in school. They believe that placing twins in the same class reinforces society's stereotype of twin children as a "unit," with little attention being given to their individual attributes. Regardless of whether twins are separated in school, the role of educators is to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each child, and to develop lesson plans to meet the needs of all children. The following tips are designed to help teachers avoid the pitfall of treating twins as a unit:

- When twins are in the same classroom, make sure they are not sitting together. This makes it easier to identify who's who. This also serves as a deterrent to twins who are contemplating doing one another's work.
- Try to find physical differences between identical twins in the same classroom. If possible, ask parents for tips for quick identification. Some ways of identification might be handedness, birthmarks/moles/freckles, differently slanted handwriting, slight voice differences, different facial widths, etc. Physical identification of the twins is the first step toward personality identification.
- Expect differences in behavior, personality, and test scores. But, don't be surprised when differences cannot be found.
- Always refer to each twin by name within the classroom. This not only helps you to learn to identify each, it serves as a good example to students by helping them realize that twins are two separate individuals.
- Avoid insensitive comparisons. An example would be saying to one twin, "You are smarter than your sister." This type of comparison is detrimental to the self-esteem of both twins.
- If one member of a set of twins (especially identical twins) is markedly behind his co-twin, investigate the cause. Remember that the IQs of twins are remarkably similar under normal circumstances.
    - Check to make sure that each twin is doing his own work.
    - Plan a conference with parents to gather more information. You might wish to ask if one twin suffered birth trauma, a birth defect, frequent illness.

- Don't rule out the possible existence of a learning disability in one of a twin pair. It is as possible for one of an identical twin pair as it is for one of a fraternal pair to have a handicap. Scheinfeld says that up to a point, differences in identical twins may be encouraged as leading to personality development, but there is danger if one twin consistently falls behind the other to any marked degree.

- Plan parent conferences to discuss the progress of each child individually.

Drs. Joseph S. Renzulli and Ann M. McGreevy, who conducted the study entitled, "Twins Included and Not Included in Special Programs for the Gifted," offer several additional recommendations pertaining to twins in special programs. Their recommendations follow:

1. *"Do not place both twins in a special program simply because they are twins. . . Nevertheless, cases of identical twins should be treated with great care and sensitivity. . . Under most circumstances, both identical twins should be capable of benefitting from a special program (when one has been selected) and, depending upon the nature of the relationship between the twins, they may enjoy and profit from being in the program together."*
2. *"We recommend that the program should encourage the twin who is not included in the program to be a guest participant in the special program, especially on those occasions when activities such as a guest speaker, field trips, or other special events are being planned. Such occasional participation may allow Twin A (the twin who is in the program) to share his enthusiasm for the program with Twin B (his co-twin) and may serve the purpose of increasing motivation and performance in Twin B."*
3. *"Whenever possible, twins should be provided with opportunities for collaborative efforts on school projects and home projects."*
4. *"We recommend that school records indicate some-*

where that a student is a member of a multiple birth. Presently, most school records do not note this information. The more we know about a child, the better we, as educators, are able to help that child learn. Although we believe that individuality should be respected and encouraged, the special effect of the "twinship bond" may present situations where twins can best express their individuality when they are most like their brother or sister. This recommendation is especially important in the case of identical twins."

5. *"Our major recommendation relates to the finding about differences in style between Twins A and B. In most cases, Twin A was selected for the special program because he or she displayed the types of motivation and performance that are most consistent with the traditional academic view of the achieving student. But the non-selected students (Twin B) oftentimes expressed the kinds of creativity and preference for open-ended and unstructured learning that are frequently valued by special programs for gifted and talented. These creative and divergent thinking skills are oftentimes "lost" when the major criterion for selection into special programs is based on strict assessment of academic performance. . . In many cases, parents reported that "the wrong twin" was selected for the program . . . Special consideration should be given to these types of abilities and learning styles, especially, in the cases of twin assessment."*

TO SEPARATE OR NOT TO SEPARATE: WHO SHOULD DECIDE?

As one teacher with a set of identical twins in her class responded in NOMOTC's survey, "Until this year, I have always felt that twins should be separated, but it has been very easy having both in my class." She continued, "Although they have different strengths and weaknesses, I

find them difficult to tell apart. The children have no trouble in this area. While in class, I never refer to them as 'the twins.' I now feel that it (placement decision) should be left up to the parents."

However, parents are often unsure about how their twins will respond to separation at school. Some prefer to leave the final decision up to the teacher or principal. Unfortunately, as indicated by several surveys, teachers and school administrators often know less about twins than parents themselves.

Separation certainly works for some twins; but it certainly doesn't work for all of them as Pam Novotny points out in her book ***The Joy of Twins***. She says, "While most researchers who study twins and their development find little to agree on, they do agree on this: There is absolutely no evidence—developmental or otherwise—to support separating twins in school as a general policy."

Should the decision to separate or keep twins together be left to parents and educators? As twins advance in age, particulary during adolescence, THEY need to become a part of the decision-making process. The Twins Foundation, an international, nonprofit, tax-exempt organization, is a clearinghouse of information for and about twins and twin research. According to an article, "Twins in School," published in the newsletter of The Twins Foundation: "A majority of twins do not suffer from being in school classes together, especially in the early elementary years. When the conflicts come, if they are going to come, is during the onset of adolescence. . . Adolescence is often a time of traumatic changes. . . but for twins, adolescence may produce added conflicts and confusions that their single-born peers do not face to the same degree. . . The inner turmoil twins are naturally feeling becomes a challenge to the twinship from within rather than from without. . . Jealousies and conflicts of interest seem to arise from nowhere. The sense of 'my space' and 'your space' suddenly becomes a major issue." Teen twins begin individually searching for "self" and wondering why and how that "self" must reflect on the other.

The differing relationships of adolescent twins in school is emphasized by S.C., another teacher who responded to the NOMOTC survey. She wrote:

> *"I teach sixth grade science. This year I had two sets of identical twins and one set of fraternal twins. The girls, who are identical, get along great and are in the*

same classes all day long. They don't mind being together. . . I see many differences in the girls. Homework, classwork, and test scores are never the same!

The identical boys could not stand to be in the same room with each other, got a schedule change, and never did anything together at school. . . One of the boys even got his hair cut very short so that he would not look like his brother.

I have a fraternal twin boy in my regular science class. He has a sister in the gifted program at our school. The boy is an average student while his sister is an A student.

I treat all of these twins as individuals. I never call them "twins." The longer I have them, the better I get to know each child."

After her experience S.C. feels that each child scould be treated as an individual and came to the conclusion that his/her placement in school should be decided by teacher, parents, and the students.

School placement decisions should involve the "team" approach. Educators should keep in mind that informed parents are the best decision-makers concerning their children. Parents of multiples should be invited to schedule an appointment to share information and feelings about "twin" issues with the educational "team"—teacher, counselor, and principal. If they are mature enough to express themselves, the feelings of the twins should also be shared by the parents or the twins themselves. A sharing and information session can help to make the educators' jobs much easier. This will, hopefully, lead to a classroom placement decision that is pleasing to all parties.

After counseling with different multiples and their parents, educators will begin to see that one general, rigid policy cannot apply to all multiples. Just as square pegs do not fit into round holes, all individuals and all twin relationships do not fit one policy. For this reason, NOMOTC strongly recommends that placement of each set of multiples be evaluated on an individual basis.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Majoring in Elementary Education, Linda Hostetler Dreyer received her Bachelor of Arts Degree from Purdue University. She and her husband, Jack, are the parents of four daughters, including identical twins. As both a teacher and parent, Linda has experience in teaching twins who were both together and separated. Her unique position gave her an expanded insight into the placement of multiple birth children in school.

Presently residing in Alpharetta, Georgia, her husband's job has necessitated many moves across the country. Each move brought new school system placement policies with which to deal, and was responsible for Linda's five-year involvement in the research for this study. While in Cincinnati, Ohio, she developed an independent, preliminary questionaire which was circulated to educators in that area.

Linda has been active at all levels of Mothers of Twins Clubs. As State President of the Texas Mothers of Multiples and a member of local clubs in three separate states, she gained knowledge from her associations with parents experiencing difficulties with the placement of their multiples in school. While serving the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc. as an officer for four years, she recognized that placement problems had become a universal problem. She then drew from her experience and her research on this topic in the writing of this booklet.

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